

Montana State Senate



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The Big Sky Country

RECEIVED

MAY 09 2008

May 7, 2008

Ravalli County Commissioners
Ravalli County
215 South Fourth St.
Hamilton, Mt. 59840

Ravalli County Commissioners

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Re: Draft B Ravalli County Zoning Regulations

Dear Commissioners:

In reviewing the Draft B zoning document it appears that the goals are not about land use, or land density, but about limiting the growth of development within our county and I oppose Draft B in it's entirety.

The creation of zoning in Ravalli County, with less than 20% private land available to zone, should have been a simple process. Plan B, as drafted, has zoned for non use of the private lands, rather than planning for the best use of the land and protecting the rights of land owners. Why not just keep the 2 for 1 policy, and require that only half of the land can be developed (clustered), with the other half kept in open space, with the farmer still having title to the open space and able to manage the land. What Draft B does is sentence each farmer or rancher to life of maintaining their land without the opportunity to develop the land for the lands highest and best use.

An issue that is not addressed is the fiscal impact to the County. By virtue of this Draft B you've added another layer of staff, including the Permit officer, and Board of Adjustment that will be funded out of the general fund. I realize that your intent is to add a fee schedule to every one of the applications and permits, but I believe that you will receive insufficient revenue to provide for the additional costs. Has county staff done an economic analysis of the additional costs to the taxpayers of this county and the revenue projections to cover the additional costs?

There is only one bright spot to this whole process and that is that zoning can be changed at any time in the future, including the ordinances that you have added to strangle the development of our County. It may take a few years for the County to realize the economic peril that Draft B has imposed upon this County, but changes will come to provide fairness to the many, imposed by the few.

I believe that what Draft B will accomplish is the economic demise of Ravalli County, in essence, economic death by a thousand cuts.

Please, before implementing Plan B, take this to the voters for approval. It is the fair and Montana way to make sure that the people's voice has been heard.

Sincerely,


Rick Laible